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Manual of Policies and Procedures for Public Library Boards

Recommended by Executive Committee
TRUSTEES AND CITIZENS DIVISION
Missouri Library Association



MISSOURI STATE LIBRARY
Jefferson City

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MISSOURI STATE LIBRARY

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DOCUMENTS DIVISION

MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARDS

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All libraries should set up policies and regulations regarding the management and operation of the library. The adoption of procedures and policies is a definite responsibility of the library board. Policies should be extracted from the library minutes and a complete up-to-date written policy statement of all policies should be kept on file for constant reference. A qualified librarian should know what has been done elsewhere and must be ready to provide the best thinking of others as a pattern. The board often turns to the librarian for suggestion and assistance. A good policy statement covers the following:

1. Library Objectives.
2. Personnel Practices: methods of appointment, tenure and retirement, responsibilities of appointees, salary scale, sick and annual leave, and attendance at professional meetings.
3. Terms of Library Use: hours open, loan periods, fines and fees for non-residents, work with groups, use of the library as a meeting room, etc.
4. Book and Material Selection Policies.
5. Relations with other libraries, cooperative programs, reciprocity agreements, contracts, etc.
6. Development of the library and its plan of service. This often takes the form of a five-year or ten-year plan. This may include plans of financing and bond issues.
7. Policies of building and grounds, insurance, etc.
8. Budget and Financial Procedure.

THE LIBRARY BOARD

For best results, the librarian and the library board operate as a team. The duties of the library board are fully outlined in the Pocket Handbook for Missouri Library Trustees, which the Trustees and Citizens Division of the Missouri Library Association has adopted. Briefly, the duties of the library board are:

1. To attend board meetings regularly.
2. To establish written rules, regulations and policies for its own government and for that of the library.
3. To secure adequate support for the library. To see that the library operates within the limitations of these finances and to approve expenditures of funds.
4. To employ a capable, qualified and trained administrative librarian. The librarian selects and recommends the appointment of staff members and recommends their dismissal.
5. To study and know Missouri Library Laws and their application to the library.
6. To interpret the library to the public and to support the library's service program in daily contacts with the public.
7. To become familiar with what constitutes good library service by reading, attending library meetings and conferences, and by visiting other libraries.

THE LIBRARIAN

The librarian is the administrator, technical advisor, and executive officer of the board to whom is delegated the duty of carrying out board policies. All the work of the library shall be under the administration of the head librarian who is directly responsible to the board for the efficient and effective operation of the library and its service to all the people within the library district. The librarian attends all board meetings and often acts as secretary of the board.

Duties of the librarian:

1. To recommend policies and carry out faithfully the policies formulated by the board.
2. To prepare an annual budget and submit it to the board for approval or for changes and approval.
3. To recommend staff appointments, salaries, promotion, dismissal and to supervise and direct all library personnel.
4. To recommend changes in regulations or policies to the board. To formulate library services objectives and to **present plans** for library development and improvement for discussion and adoption by the board.
5. To report regularly to the board at each meeting on:
 - a. Progress of the library. This may include plans for the future and problems which need discussion.
 - b. Statistical information on the operation of the library.
 - c. An accurate financial report of expenditures and amount left in the budget.
6. To make annual reports to the governing authorities, the State Library and the citizens.
 - a. Section 182.060 of Library Laws of Missouri states: On or before the first day of April, the board of trustees shall make a report and send a copy to the County Court and to the Missouri State Library.

- b. Section 182.210 of Library Laws of Missouri states:
The librarian shall make, within eight weeks after the end of the fiscal year of the library, an annual report to the board of trustees, stating the condition of the library and its services on the last day of the fiscal year, the various sums of money received from the library fund and from other sources, and how the moneys have been expended and for what purposes, and such other statistics, information and suggestions as may be of general interest. This report shall be transmitted by the board to the proper official and governing body of the city and a copy shall be transmitted at the same time to the Missouri State Library.
7. To define the duties of each staff member, to assign to them such positions and work which are deemed best for the efficient management of the service, and to direct their work.
 8. To select and purchase, (under general policies adopted by the board) books, library materials, equipment and supplies.
 9. To make decisions on methods of library operation and management and to maintain accurate records of library finance and use.
 10. To provide reader assistance and guidance so that the citizens may make the best use of the library.
 11. To plan the service so that every resident can take advantage of it.
 12. To be responsible for the appearance and care of the buildings and equipment.
 13. To take an interest and a part in community affairs.
 14. To set up a good public relations program so that the community cannot escape knowing what the library can offer and to prepare and release all library publicity.
 15. To attend and take part in professional meetings, workshops and institutes. To encourage the staff to

take part in meetings when possible.

- a. Section 182.110 of Library Laws of Missouri states:
County librarians shall be required to attend state library meetings and district library institutes, the actual and necessary expenses incident thereto being a charge against the county library fund.
16. The librarian shall be present at all board meetings except at those times when his or her status or salary is to be a matter of business, in which case the board shall take necessary steps to immediately notify the librarian of the action taken by the board.
 17. The librarian is authorized to appoint all personnel to the staff of the library subject to the approval of the library board. The library board may make suggestions of applicants for positions to the librarian. No board member shall make commitments or promises to persons to be recommended for employment.
 18. No relative of the library board members by blood or marriage relationship shall be employed by the library.
a. Section 182.050 of Library Laws of Missouri states:
No person shall be employed by the board of library trustees or by the librarian who is related within the third degree by blood or by marriage to any trustee of the board.
 19. The librarian shall be required to submit to the library board for approval all changes in salaries for the library employees.
 20. The librarian shall consult with the library board on the formulation of library service objectives, plans and policies, and shall seek board approval before administering them.
 21. The librarian may receive, on behalf of the library board, under such rules as they may prescribe from time to time, books, money, equipment and other library materials as gifts, and shall be authorized to dispose of such gift materials as are not required for the library collection or service. The librarian shall send appropriate acknowledgement to the donor of all valuable and useful gifts.

RECOMMENDED POLICIES FOR GENERAL OPERATION
OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE

1. Criticisms of the library service, the librarian or the library staff which are brought to the attention of board members shall be immediately and directly reported to the administrative librarian.
2. Individual board members shall refuse to entertain criticism and complaints of the library and its administration from members of the library staff. All such criticism will receive attention by board members only when submitted by staff members in writing to the administrative librarian and a copy sent to the president of the library board. The staff member may request a hearing with the board.
3. Board members, librarian and staff shall at all times support each other in all their relations with the public.
4. The library shall serve as a clearing agency for all library publicity. Therefore, the administrative librarian shall be empowered to issue publicity items and stories to newspapers and other agencies of communication.
5. No board member shall release to the public, orally or in writing, information on library policies not previously agreed upon at board meetings.
6. No board member shall make individual decisions on library policy or take action on library matters or influence, or attempt to influence, the public or other board members in such a way as to cause the pressure of public opinion to direct or influence the type or plan of service of the library.
7. No board member shall seek or expect special privileges with regard to library services; nor shall he in any way profit or appear to profit personally by any policy or activity of the board or of the library.

BY-LAWS

Meetings:

1. The regular monthly meeting of the library board shall be held at the library at a time determined by the members each year.
2. The annual meeting shall be held at the time of the regular monthly meeting for the month of _____ at the usual place.
3. Special meetings may be called by the president, or upon written request of _____ members, for the transaction of business stated in the call for meeting.

Officers:

1. Officers of the board shall be chosen at the regular annual meeting of the board, and shall be as follows: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, or secretary-treasurer.
2. The president of the board shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees, authorize calls for any special meetings, and generally perform the duties of a presiding officer.
3. The vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president.
4. The secretary of the board shall keep a true and accurate account of all proceedings of the board meetings.

Quorum:

A quorum for the transaction of library board business shall consist of a simple majority of the board.

Committees:

Any special committees as may be appointed from time to time shall serve until a final report is made by the committee to the library board, at which time the committee

passes out of existence, provided that all committees must make a progress report to the library board at each of its meetings.

Order of Business:

1. The librarian shall prepare an Agenda of Business for each meeting of the library board. In preparing the agenda, the librarian shall consult the president of the library board.
2. The Agenda of Business shall include the following items, in this order:
 - Roll Call of Members
 - Reading of Minutes of Last Meeting
 - Librarian's Financial Report of the Library
 - Approval of Monthly Expenditures
 - Progress and Service Report of the Librarian
 - Communications
 - Unfinished Business
 - New Business
 - Adjournment

Amendment of By-Laws:

These by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the library board when a quorum is present by a unanimous vote. In the absence of a unanimous vote such amendments shall be considered passed and in force by a majority vote at the next regular board meeting.

ADDITIONAL BY-LAW PROVISIONS AND POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARDS

Regional library boards are composed of the members of the respective library boards comprising the library districts of the region. They are authorized by law to function and to transact business as a joint board. Appointment and duties of regional library board members are stated in the law governing county libraries (see Library Laws of Missouri, Sections 182.050 and 182.060).

The Regional Library Board acts as the legal governing and policy-making board for the entire region. In order to operate a unified library service throughout the region it must function as a unit with one set of by-laws and policies and one administrative librarian. For this reason the following policy should be adopted by each regional library board:

Library boards comprising the regional library shall not hold separate meetings for conducting official business which in any way affects the operation of the regional library service, and all official action of the respective library boards must be authorized by the regional library board before it is put into operation.

Appointment of Members:

The library board shall make recommendations to the various governing bodies (county courts) through the respective boards of the region for appointment and reappointment of members to the library board. No board member shall be recommended for reappointment after having served two full terms or 8 years.

Quorum:

A quorum for the transaction of library board business shall consist of _____ of the total authorized membership of the boards of the library districts that are parties to the joint contract.

PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Hours of Work: Full-time personnel, both professional and non-professional: 40 hours a week - 8 hours a day for five days and one day off. A schedule should be set up whereby each person, full-time or part-time, knows and keeps regular hours of work. A staff member scheduled for over-time work should be allowed compensatory time within the month, or compensation at the regular rate of pay. Changes in schedule are made only with the approval of the chief librarian or head of the department.

Library Open Hours: (should be continuous and usually the same each day) Here are the minimum recommended hours:
Population of 50,000 and over: 72 hrs. a week, 12 hrs. a day, 6 days a week.
Population of 25,000 - 50,000: 54 hrs. a week, 9 hrs. a day, 6 days a week.
Population of 5,000 - 25,000: 36 hrs. a week, 6 hrs. a day, 6 days a week.
Under 5,000: 24 hrs. a week, 6 hrs. for 4 days or 4 hrs. for 6 days.

Annual Leave: (for staff who have been on the payroll for six months) Full-time professional staff usually receive three to four weeks vacation with pay. Full-time non-professional staff two weeks vacation with pay. Part-time employees one week with pay.

Vacation time is not cumulative. It should be taken at the convenience of the library. The board should be give notice at regular meeting of the time that the chief librarian will be away on vacation.

Sick Leave: Sick leave for personal illness: 12 working days a year with pay, cumulative to 60 days. Illness in the immediate family requiring the absence of the employee is charged to sick leave. Three days leave with pay for death in the immediate family.

Holidays: Holidays should be approved and designated by the library board. These are usually taken: New Year's Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

State Holidays in Missouri are: New Year's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Jefferson's Birthday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Armed Forces Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Any primary, State or general election day is also a state holiday.

Professional Meetings and Affiliations: Time should be allowed for attendance and expenses paid for professional meetings and institutes within the limits of the budget. Membership in professional state and national organizations should be encouraged. Both board members and staff members should be encouraged to visit other libraries.

Hiring: The merit system of selection, appointment and promotion of all library personnel is a policy which should be adopted by every library board. There should be a written application for all positions. The librarian selects and recommends for employment all staff members for the approval of the board. Clerical personnel should be on six months' probation. Clerical salaries should be in line with other local salaries for similar work. Professional employees should be paid a professional salary as nearly in line with the standards in other library systems.

Suggestions for Library Boards on Employment of Librarians:

The Missouri State Library keeps a file of librarians available for positions with their credentials. When a library or library board has a vacancy, they may write requesting assistance in securing a librarian. A description of the position, qualifications desired and salary to be paid should be indicated.

Applications will be sent for the consideration of the employer. The State Library only provides information concerning applicants. Application papers are not to be considered as a recommendation of the applicant by the Missouri State Library.

Before proceeding to contact applicants, the board should decide on its policy in regard to the position, salary range (minimum and maximum depending on qualifications and experience), professional and personal qualifications,

duties and responsibilities of the librarian, vacation, sick leave, attendance at professional meetings, etc.

In writing to applicants, it is suggested that a brief description of the position, work required, salary, and population of area served, annual income, probable staff, size of library, quarters and population of town in which library is located be given. Information which will give the applicant a good picture of the position and the community will save the time of both applicant and employer.

The board should also decide on the question of whether employment is to be by correspondence only, or by interview. If an interview is required, it is customary to offer the applicant all or part of travel expenses. The board should decide on policy in regard to this.

When several applicants are invited to come for an interview, it is recommended that arrangements be made to interview each applicant at different times in order to avoid embarrassment to applicants. When the interview is completed, unless the board wishes to act immediately, the chairman should indicate to the applicant that he or she will be informed of the board's decision within a specified time.

With the present scarcity of librarians, it is recommended that the board avoid delay in making decisions and that it act promptly in offering positions to applicants selected.

Librarians are usually employed by a letter stating salary and terms of employment to which a reply by letter or wire is requested. The correspondence is kept as a record of employment. Contracts are not generally used, although the board may require a contract if it so desires.

Promotions and Salary Increases: Promotions should be based on satisfactory performance and potential development. Regular salary increases for satisfactory service should be included in the budget and be made upon the recommendation of the librarian. The librarian should recommend the promotion or the dismissal of all employees of the library showing good cause for such action to the library board.

Termination of Employment: Resignations must be in writing. Professional personnel should give, and be given, one month's notice. Non-professional personnel should give, and be given, two weeks' notice. Any vacation time to which the employee is entitled should be granted in terminal pay. It is desirable that the chief librarian give as much notice as possible before departure, preferably not less than two months.

Personnel Records: The chief librarian should keep a complete file of qualifications, date employed, vacations and sick leave taken, raises in salary, and date terminated for each employee. Many libraries prefer a monthly time sheet. In this way each employee's complete record is quickly and easily seen.

Retirement: Each library board should investigate social security, city retirement and county retirement possibilities for the library staff.

Staff Meetings: Regular staff meetings with planned agenda are of great value to good library service. Problems, new services, book orders or book usage, public relations, any number of subjects may be considered. In a library system it is important that community librarians and bookmobile personnel have a chance to talk over matters concerning the entire system. Adequate preparation must be made so that these meetings are constructive and worthwhile.

Classification and Pay Plan: Better standards and all-over organization is attained if each position in the library is analyzed. Minimum qualifications, typical tasks and a salary schedule giving the range from beginning to top salary for that position are worked out.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Once each year, at a specified regular time, the librarian is charged with the task of preparing a budget of library service estimated expenditures for the ensuing year. Such budget shall show the unused balance in the treasury and the purposes for which the fund has been reserved. The budget will also show the sources of anticipated income and a detailed list of proposed expenditures. The budget shall be presented and approved by the library board at that meeting or no later than the subsequent meeting. The proposed items of expenditures shall cover the use of all accumulated balances and expected incomes, including scheduled reserves.

The librarian shall be required to submit for approval by the library board at each of its meetings a complete financial status report showing amounts budgeted and amounts spent to date.

The librarian shall be the only authorized purchasing agent for the library under such rules and instructions as the library board may deem necessary.

BOOK SELECTION

For principles and standards for building and maintaining a useful and adequate book collection consult Public Library Service, A Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards, A.L.A., 1956.

It states: "Systematic removal from collections of materials no longer useful is essential to maintaining the purposes and quality of resources. Annual withdrawals from the collection should average at least five percent of the collection."

A public library has no room on its shelves for either worn-out, out-of-date books or for books of poor literary quality. Unsightly, worn-out books are dead materials and not only detract from the appearance of the library but hinder its efficient operation. Books no longer used are a financial liability because of space which is needed for usable books. Infrequently used books may be borrowed for patrons from the Missouri State Library.

In order to keep the quality of the book collection up to a good standards and to make room on the shelves for useful new books, the librarian must constantly check the book collection for worn-out, out-of-date and valueless materials.

Successful "weeding" of a book collection requires good judgement and practical experience. Certain bibliographical tools are essential for the wise selection of books to be withdrawn from the collection. These tools are: the Standard Catalog for Public Libraries and its Supplements; the Children's Catalog and Supplements; and the Fiction Catalog and Supplements. If the book is listed in any of these, it is usually retained in the collection, unless rebinding is impossible or unless it is so worn-out and dirty that a new copy of the title is required.

Further information on weeding the library may be obtained by writing the Missouri State Library.

All books published prior to 1830 should be put aside and held until they can be checked to determine their value. The State Library will be glad to lend publications to use for this purpose.

Series type books for children which are poorly written, untrue to life, sensational, foolishly sentimental and consequently unwholesome for children should be discarded. A list of books not circulated by standard libraries may be obtained by writing the Missouri State Library.

BOOK SELECTION PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

"Materials should be selected, retained and discarded in the light of the conscious objectives of each library.

"Every library should have a written statement of policy concerning the selection and maintenance of its collection of books and of non-book materials.

"This statement should be approved by the governing body of the library. It sets forth the purposes, levels of quality and community needs to reflect in acquiring materials. It affirms the library's position on applying resources on controversial subjects. From it one should be able to learn the scope, emphasis and limits of the collection, and the policies which govern withdrawals."¹

"A book selection policy statement may be defined as a summation of the philosophy, the standards and the principles which underlie the choice of books and other communication materials that make up the resources of a library. A policy statement records the library's concept of its responsibilities in terms of the needs of the community and the rights of its citizens. It is basically the analysis of the function of a particular community to the immediate and long range objectives of the library."²

Limitations of funds and space should be related to the principles upon which book selection is made.

The A.L.A. Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read statement should be used as the basis for a policy statement concerning controversial materials.

General principles which should be considered in making a book selection policy statement are:

1. It should be developed to meet the needs of the particular library and community.

1. Public Library Service, A.L.A., Chicago, 1956. pp.31-32.
2. Gregory, Ruth W. "Principles Behind a Book Selection Policy," ILA Record, 1956.

BOOKSHELF

2. The policy statement should be based on the objectives of the library.
3. The statement should include the acknowledgement of the right of access to all sides of controversial questions.
4. It should include a statement concerning the acceptance and disposition of gift books.
5. It should include a statement of the purpose, basis and standards for selection of books for various groups, such as, adults, children and young people.
6. It should include a statement of the basis on which books and materials are excluded or not selected for the collection.
7. It should include a statement that books are to be selected for their intrinsic value rather than on the basis of race, politics or religion of the author.

Every library trustee should read the following. All are available for loan or for free distribution from the State Library.

COST OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE IN 1959, American Library Association, 1960.

THE FREEDOM TO READ, Rich and McKeon, editors. Bowker, 1957.

HANDBOOK FOR LIBRARY TRUSTEES, by Marian Winsor, R. R. Bowker, Co., 1955.

IMPROVING PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE IN MISSOURI, Missouri Libraries Planning Committee, 1953. (Free--order from Missouri State Library)

THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, adopted by American Library Association, 1948. (Free--order from Missouri State Library)

LIBRARY LAWS OF MISSOURI. (Free--order from Missouri State Library)

THE LIBRARY TRUSTEE, by A. G. Hall. American Library Association, 1937.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN AMERICAN LIFE, by Ernestine Rose. Columbia University Press, 1954.

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE; A GUIDE TO EVALUATION WITH MINIMUM STANDARDS, American Library Association, 1956.

SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES, Report of Joint Committee of N.E.A. and A.L.A., 1941.

STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES, American Library Association, 1960.

WONDERFUL WORLD OF BOOKS, by Alfred Stefferud. Houghton, 1953.

PERIODICALS

Show-Me Libraries, published by Missouri State Library,
Jefferson City.

M.L.A. Quarterly, St. Louis University Libraries, 3655 W.
Pine Blvd., St. Louis 3, Missouri. (Sent free to M.L.A.
members.)

A.L.A. Bulletin, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron,
Chicago 11, Illinois. (Sent free to A.L.A. members.)

Library Journal, R. R. Bowker, Co., 62 W. 45th St. New
York 36, N.Y.

Wilson Bulletin, H. W. Wilson Company, 950-972 University,
New York 52, N.Y.

FILMS AND FILMSTRIPS

Films and filmstrips are available for loan for library
board meetings and community meetings from the Missouri
State Library.

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BOOKS FOR ALL

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THE LIBRARIAN

THE LIBRARY, A FAMILY AFFAIR

THE LIBRARY STORY.

MAN AWARE

OZARK BOOKMOBILE

PHONE YOUR LIBRARY

SMALL TOWN LIBRARY

YOUR LIBRARY, ISLAND OR PENINSULA (Filmstrip and record
on A.L.A. Standards.)

YOUR LIBRARY, MAGNET OR MONUMENT (Filmstrip and record)

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